SENATE BILL REPORT

2SSB 5579

AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 15, 1994

Brief Description: Requiring a state-wide technology strategy.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Trade, Technology & Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Skratek, Erwin, Bluechel, Deccio, M. Rasmussen, Bauer, Jesernig, Sellar, Pelz and Winsley)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRADE, TECHNOLOGY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Second Substitute Senate Bill No. 5579 be substituted therefor, and the second substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Skratek, Chairman; Sheldon, Vice Chairman; Bluechel, Cantu, Erwin, M. Rasmussen and Williams.

Staff: Traci Ratzliff (786-7452)

Hearing Dates: February 5, 1993; February 26, 1993; January 21, 1994; February 3, 1994

BACKGROUND:

Over 1,500 high technology firms currently conduct business in Washington State. These firms include aerospace, medical device manufacturers, electronics companies, biotechnology, computer hardware manufacturers, environmental firms, and computer software companies. Over 100,000 jobs are provided by this industry, excluding Boeing.

Those most concerned about Washington's economy suggest that the fostering and development of high technology businesses is necessary to assure the overall growth and stability of the state's economy. Numerous states have established science and technology advisory councils as mechanisms for evaluating, developing and implementing statewide policies that seek to encourage the growth and development of the high technology industry within their states. These councils usually consist of representatives from industry, academia, and government agencies.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development is directed to develop a statewide technology strategy. The department is directed to specifically address policies related to: strengthening research and development partnerships between industry, academia and government; developing a work force educated and skilled to work in technology-based businesses; identifying capital funding

options for technology-based companies; creating incentives for the start up of technology-based businesses; and expanding and coordinating industrial modernization, technology transfer, and product development programs within the state.

In addition, the department shall examine: the performance and cost-effectiveness of existing state technology programs, including but not limited to, the Washington Technology Center; whether the current organizational structure of state technology programs results in these programs meeting the needs and expectations of businesses in this state; whether the patent and royalty percentage to professors and scientists working at public colleges or universities should be increased; whether ownership and possession of patents can or should be given to scientists working at public colleges or universities; and the impact of having state research universities conduct more applied research and less basic research. The department shall submit the strategy to the Executive-Legislative Committee on Economic Development for review.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

This program is another step forward in helping policy-makers to understand what is important to the technology industry.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

SIRTI was reorganized in 1990. SIRTI will move into its new building in May at which time it can really begin to get its program up and running. To reorganize SIRTI now would result in a significant setback for the organization.

TESTIFIED: PRO--original sub: Ian McGowan, American Electricians Association; Sandra Lorentzen, Pacific Science Center; CON--original sub: Jim Halstrom, Momentum; Hugh Sullivan, Executive Director, SIRTI; Larry Ganders, Washington State University